

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

homemakers' chat

FOR USE IN NON-COMMERCIAL BROADCASTS ONLY

U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Monday, November 1, 1943

Subject: "CHRISTMAS GIFTS FROM THE PIECE BOX." Information from Extension specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

---ooOoo---

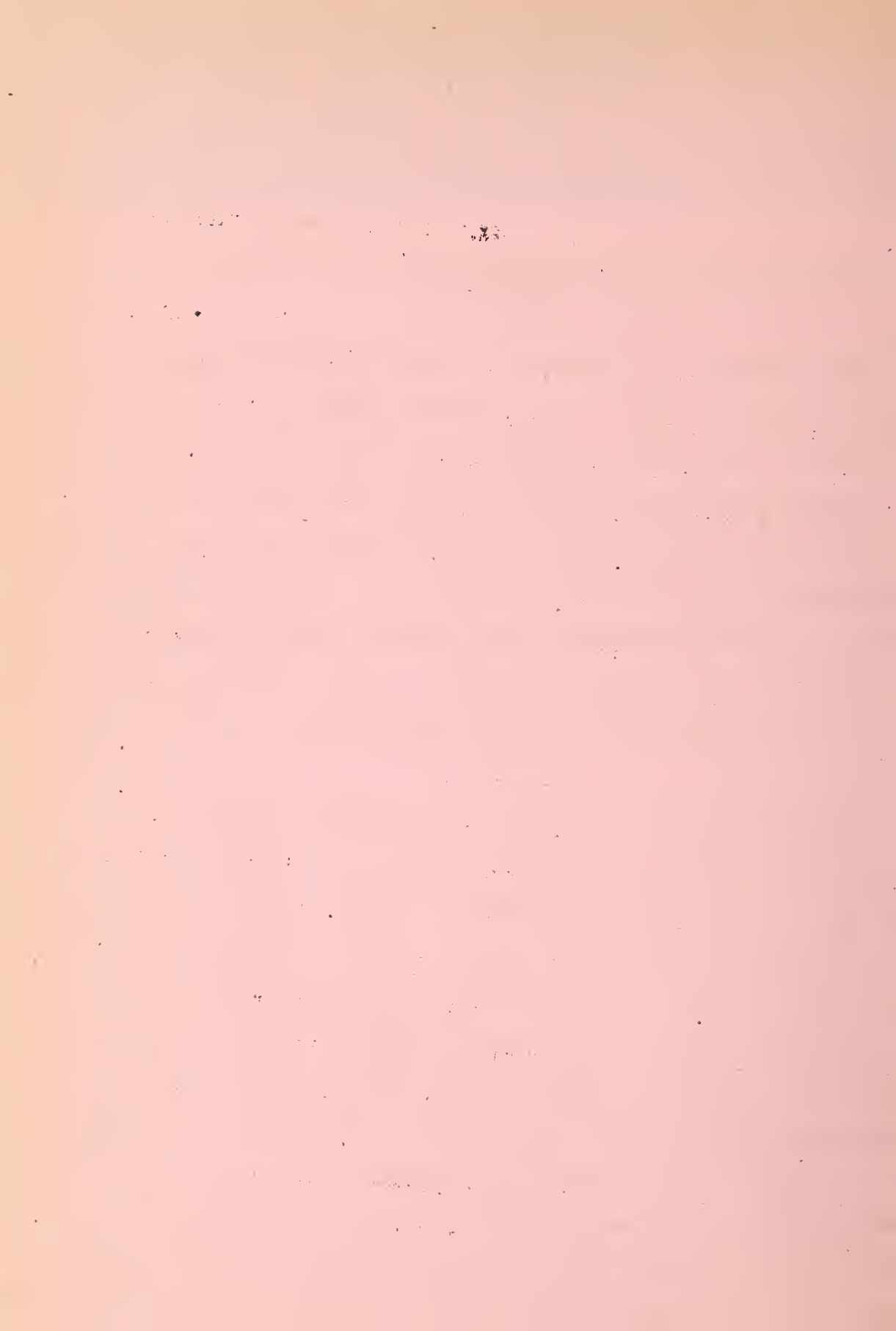
The first of November is none too soon to start on the Christmas gifts you are going to make this year. Most homemakers have less spare time than ever, and at first thought many brush aside the idea of home-made Christmas remembrances. It may seem much easier to go to a store and buy something. But on second thought they realize shopping is not so satisfactory as in pre-war times. It's time-consuming and tiring. This Christmas ought to be different, and be tied in with all our other war efforts--such as easing transportation--making good use of what we have on hand--making things do as long as possible--avoiding food and other waste--buying more war saving stamps and bonds instead of new things.

Some of you may be planning food gifts--home canned fruits and vegetables, jellies, pickles, and so on, or baked gifts. But also, this Christmas, it's appropriate to look through piece boxes for materials that don't cost anything, that can be made into useful tokens of our Christmas spirit. Most homemakers accumulate various choice remnants and odd shaped cutting from making clothing or household furnishings. You may have a length of print or a remnant of tapestry or drapery material or bits for patchwork. The ideal gift this year could be a simple remembrance made from some of these pieces, and, if possible, some war savings stamps to the amount you might wish to spend.

Extension workers of the War Food Administration have always found farm homemakers interested in homemade Christmas gifts, and many city women are, too. Many women believe that a hand-made gift expresses more to the one who gets it

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OCT 28 1943



than something bought. In a great many States farm women's home demonstration clubs talk over Christmas suggestions about this time of year, and you may find some of their ideas useful on piece box presents you could make.

Some extension workers report a vogue for using patchwork pieces. Farm women have made "Patchwork quilt" knitting bags in the shape of a roll, something like a music roll but larger; a carnival apron of unbleached muslin trimmed with a border of gay patchwork squares on the skirt and bib; a lined bag for shopping or knitting, the outside part of patchwork. Women in many States also make braided and hooked mats, rugs, and chair seats from miscellaneous scraps, and stuffed dolls and toy animals.

Last year some farm women devoted their club meetings to making things for soldiers, such as field kits for toilet articles, folding snap shot cases, sewing kits, money belts, writing cases, and so on. Men and boys still at home might like some of these useful articles. Games made included funny animal shaped bean bags, and stuffed toys. For the kitchen, women made "oven mitts" and pot holders from Turkish toweling or quilted scraps, and sets for the breakfast nook-- short curtains and a matching table runner--- of plain material with colored appliqué designs.

Scraps of cotton prints and other materials in the piece box would answer very well for making some of the cotton gifts suggested in 3 or 4 of the cotton-growing States under their "cotton Christmas" programs. For example, you might make this a "bag" Christmas---think up all sorts of different useful bags you could make. Since we're all having to carry our own groceries and other bundles, marketing or shopping bags probably head the list. If you have any large pieces of tapestry or upholstery material, they would be perfect for this type of bag. Both sides need not be of the same material. Make a fitted lining, and put a pocket in the lining, or on the outside for the ration book, change purse, or keys. One very good shape is like a paper shopping bag, long and flat, with boxed sides for roominess, and handles on one of the narrow sides.

There are many other handy bags to make according to your materials.

Envelope purses that match a hat or turban; laundry bags, bags for knitting or crochet work, for string; a bag to cover a hot water bottle, or one for carrying a thermos bottle for lunch; a sleeping bag for a baby; envelope sets and shoe bags for those who are going away from home, to make suit-cases neat.

An "apron" Christmas is another idea for using cotton "makin's" from the piece box. It saves time to make a number of gifts of the same kind, and everybody gets a present of about the same value and attractiveness. An apron can be any size from a child's pinafore to a complete kitchen coverall.

Here are some other gift ideas for articles that are easy to make from materials likely to be on hand: Make a warm vest for a woman out of a man's vest. Use a different, but warm woolen material to make the back. Cut down adult size pajamas for a child; make a bed-jacket; or a shoulder scarf of a short length of woolen fabric; use two or more materials to make a three-cornered pillow, stuffed with cotton, for reading in bed; make mattress protectors from flour sacks joined together, also bed-spring and pillow protectors; make fingertip and guest towels from bits of linen or the good part of old towels.

All these suggestions concern only the piece box. Farm women also use many other kinds of material for unusual home-made gifts--bits of wood, buttons, nuts, flour and feed sacks, string, spools, corn husks, leather for gloves, rabbit pelts, wool yarn and cotton thread for knitting and crocheting.

Whatever you decide to make, let it be simple, quickly made, and above all, of practical use. Wartime is no time to spend hours decorating tea towels, making tidies, fancy handkerchief cases, pin cushions or sachets. Better a few really useful aprons or bags or stuffed toys, or as many war saving stamps as you can give!

